

AN incredible goal by Mick Holifield ten minutes before half-time, was enough to give Wycombe Wanderers three valuable Rothmans Isthmian League points on Saturday and move them into third place in the table behind Bishop's Stortford and Dulwich Hamlet.

Holifield's goal, an astonishing volley from just inside the box, was almost an exact replica of the B.B.C. Television "Goal of the Month" scored by Alan Mullery for Fulham against Leicester recently. It was the sort of effort that hits the back of the net once in 20 attempts — and on this occasion it gave Kingstonian goalkeeper John Overton no chance whatsoever.

Unfortunately, this was only one flash of brilliance in a game that otherwise was all too similar to the conditions — dull and dreary. A shower 15 minutes before kick off made the pitch sodden and conditions difficult.

Kingstonian proved to be very much as expected. A hard, middle of the table side with one aim in mind — to stop the opposition scoring. It made for a boring encounter. Wycombe, too, must take their fair share of the blame for this uninspiring match, their poor finishing and general lack of understanding frustrating the crowd all too often.

Wanderers welcomed back in-

ternational Derek Gamblin for his first taste of league football since October. "Gamblol" came on for the last ten minutes at the expense of Roger Grant.

Kevin Raine, the tall goalkeeper signed recently from Hayes, also came in for his second full game as John Maskell

## By STUART EARP Wycombe W. 1, Kingstonian 0

was still troubled by a shoulder injury sustained at Evenwood the previous week. Raine gave a near faultless performance and his booming voice certainly left his colleagues in no doubt. Kevin's catching was excellent considering the greasy ball, although he was never under any concerted pressure throughout the 90 minutes.

Full-back Jim Clark provided the first incident in the first half when he almost turned Holifield's firm cross into his own goal and from the flag kick Horseman wasted a good opportunity by strangely heading wide when unmarked.

Kingstonian suffered something of a setback in the 12th minute when Nick Glover limped off the field to be replaced by Alan Kelsall, but the extra defender only served to make Wycombe's task of scoring goals that bit more difficult.

Indeed, Wanderers' raids became somewhat spasmodic as the half progressed and it took a full-back to bring Overton into serious action. Terry Reardon's free kick was blocked by the visitors' defence and Phil Wood

rifled the ball towards the bottom corner only to see Overton dive to his left and save.

At the other end Kingstonian offered little to worry centre-backs Keith Mead and Dave Bullock but the latter looked unusually suspectable on Saturday. One such case came in the 21st

minute when he attempted to loft the ball back to his 'keeper but ballooned it nearer the corner flag than Raine.

In midfield, Wanderers were again well served by Larry Pritchard and Terry Reardon. Pritchard often managed to escape the shackles of Trevor Pearce, who stuck to him like a leech, while Reardon occasionally produced some touches of sheer magic although he tended to become over confident in the closing stages.

But it was Pritchard who spun one of the best first half chances after 31 minutes when Reardon split the visitors' defence with a beautiful ball to Perrin, who crossed invitingly to Pritchard. For some reason, however, the Wycombe skipper stumbled and the chance of a clear shot disappeared.

Just as the half seemed to be petering out and most had settled for a blank scoreline, Holifield awakened the slumber with his shot out of the blue. Grant and Perrin combined to lay on the chance for Holifield to crash home on the volley for one of the best goals of the

season. England manager Charles Hughes must have been highly impressed with the way the goal was taken.

Kingstonian's attack throughout the game was woefully short of ideas and their main strength, Johnny Doyle, spent more and more of his time

in midfield. But in the early stages of the second half, they almost surprised 'keeper Raine. Former Wanderer Trevor Waughman (their top scorer this term with 17 goals) outpaced Grant and crossed in the middle with Raine just getting his fingertips to the ball to divert it out of danger.

Wycombe's stuttering attack went close in the 54th minute when Horseman ran onto Evans' pass and seemed to have clipped the ball over the 'keeper but a deflection took it wide of goal. It was one of the few occasions the home front three looked dangerous. Evans was unpredictable, Horseman a little out of touch and Perrin found it hard to keep upright on the tricky surface.

The conditions were also difficult for the referee, but this didn't account for several questionable decisions from Mr. Downey who once astounded everyone in Loakes Park with a free kick against Waughman on the top wing when the player hadn't touched either the ball or his opponent.

With the middle of the field churning up, the second half

play soon became bogged down. There were occasional flashes, like in the 70th minute when Horseman bent a long range effort towards the corner, to see Overton dive full length. But it was not until the last 15 minutes that Wycombe really justified their place in the table.

Pritchard began the assault with a long range effort and then seconds later Horseman set up a chance for Evans but both players dallied too long and the eventual shot was blocked. Then, after 76 minutes, Adrian Hill tried a suicidal back pass from the corner flat which Evans intercepted and placed into the path of Holifield. The defence was really stretched by the move but Mick overran the ball and miscued over the crossbar.

Kingstonian survived the pressure and came back themselves in the closing seconds looking for an equaliser. A free kick and a corner gave the Blues a couple of anxious moments before referee Downey brought an undistinguished encounter to a close.

**WYCOMBE:** K. Raine, P. Wood, D. Bullock, K. Mead, R. Grant (sub. D. Gamblin 80 mins.), L. Pritchard, T. Reardon, M. Holifield, A. Horseman, D. Evans, S. Perrin.

**KINGSTONIAN:** J. Overton, B. Adaway, J. Clark, A. Hill, M. Preston, P. Procter, T. Waughman, T. Pearce, D. Juneman, N. Glover (sub. A. Kelsall 12 mins.), J. Doyle.

**Referee:** C. Downey (Isleworth).

**Half-time:** 1-0. **Goalscorer,** Wycombe — Holifield (40).

**Official paying attendance:** 1,707. **Approximate total attendance:** 2,100.